



Alberta Kirkpatrick with glass plates she designed to raise money for the preservation of Bug Light.

Tom Tajima/The Patriot Ledger

## Her special interest aids Bug Light fund

Cup plate shows historic local beacon

DUXBURY — Alberta Kirkpatrick, planned to contribute to the Save Bug Light fund-raising effort, but wanted to do more than just hand over a check.

So she decided to design a commemorative cup plate, a small glass plate engraved with a depiction of the 114-year-old harbor light.

All proceeds from the sale of the crystal plates will help pay for restoration and maintenance of the metal lighthouse at the entrance to Plymouth, Duxbury and Kingston bays.

The upper half was scheduled for demolition until a tri-town citizens committee agreed to refurbish it. The Coast Guard has restored the metal base.

Volunteers in the three towns have raised about \$19,000 of the \$20,000 to \$25,000 needed by holding fashion shows, selling T-shirts and dining guides, playing baseball games, and winning last year's July 4 parade float competition.

Bug Light has special meaning to her, Kirkpatrick said. "My husband's father was a lobsterman. He went out rain or shine for 35 years, up until 1970."

If a fog came up or he was out late, he looked for Bug Light to guide him in.

"He always knew the Bug Light was there. That was his friend coming in," she said.

Her mother-in-law cooked the fresh clams, scallops, crab and lobster and sold them in a small shop on their Bay Road property.

Kirkpatrick still owns the family's house.

"They earned their livelihood from the bay. When I was dating him, my husband spent the weekends with his parents. The cup plate is in memory of all three of them."

"I owe them a lot. I have a nice, little, cozy home now. It was a

summer camp (cottage). My father-in-law put in a cellar with a wheelbarrow."

The brochure that accompanies each cup plate says Bug Light can be seen from a distance of six miles, flashing red three times every 10 seconds. Keepers no longer man the light, but when they did, there were many rescues. The brochure says 90 people were saved one year, including 35 Girl Scouts.

Kirkpatrick said she recalled her grandfather pouring his tea or coffee into a cup plate.

"The whole family thought he was real crude, but it apparently was a custom. It wasn't until after the 1850s that we got handles on china," she said.

The first cup plates matched a china set. Then the clear, colored crystal became popular and now is widely collected.

Kirkpatrick is the vice president of the South Shore chapter of the Pairpoint Cup Plate Collectors of America.

She said she had 500 of her Bug Light plates made at the Pairpoint Glass Co. in Sagamore, where molten glass is pressed by an engraved steel plate. So far, she has sold about 100 plates at \$9 each.

The underside of the plate has a rope motif, in honor of the Plymouth Cordage company that manufactured rope for vessels worldwide.

Bug Light, fondly called the spark plug light because of its resemblance to a spark plug, is centered on the plate's face with a lobster boat to the left.

Encircling the rim is the name Bug Light, the names of the three towns, and a lobster pot, a clam shell and a scallop shell.

The plates can be purchased by writing to Bug Light Plate, Box 2495, Duxbury 02331.